

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4413

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0194

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SF

SUBJECT: GOVT STARTS TO MOVE TRIBESMEN BY FORCE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS STARTED TO MOVE PROTESTING TSWANA TRIBESMEN IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE "BLACK SPOT" IN NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE. END SUMMARY.

2. APPROXIMATELY 2,000 TSWANA TRIBESMEN, LIVING ON 10,000 HECTARES OF SAG-OWNED BANTU TRUST LAND AT MAYEN, NEAR NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE TOWN OF TAUNG, ARE PROTESTING GOVERNMENT DECISION TO MOVE THEM APPROXIMATELY FIFTY MILES TO SLIGHTLY LARGER AREA WHICH HAS BEEN ALBCATED TO BOPHUTHATSWANA HOMELAND EXPRESSLY FOR THEIR USE. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, POLICE UNITS HAVE MOVED INTO AREA AND ARE COMPELLING TRIBESMEN TO MOVE. TRIBAL LEADERS COMPLAIN THAT LAND IN RESETTLEMENT AREA IS INFERIOR TO THAT WHICH THEY HAVE OCCUPIED FOR ABOUT EIGHTY YEARS. THEY ALSO ALLEGE THAT GOVERNMENT HAS NOT OFFERED COMPENSATION FOR IMPROVEMENTS MADE AT MAYEN. SAG HAS BEEN PLANNING MOVE FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS.

3. GOVERNMENT HAS JUSTIFIED ACTION BY STATING THAT THERE
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HAS BEEN FRICTION BETWEEN WHITES AND BLACKS IN AREA AND THAT

CREATION OF RESERVOIR FOR NEW SPITSKOP DAM WILL COMPLETELY ISOLATE TRIBE FROM OTHER TSWANAS, THUS CREATING "BLACK SPOT." GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN STATE THAT RELOCATION AREA HAS BEEN EQUIPPED WITH 400 PREFABRICATED HOMES, TWO SCHOOLS, SHOPS, ETC. ACCORDING TO SAG, BOPHUTHATSWANA GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED OF RESETTLEMENT PLANS AND HAS MADE NO OBJECTION.

4. THIS RESETTLEMENT DEBATED IN PARLIAMENT IN OCTOBER 1974. AT THAT TIME, OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN, NOTABLY PROGRESSIVE PARTY MP HELEN SUZMAN AND UNITED PARTY MPS NIC OLIVIER AND RADCLYFFE CADMAN, CHARGED GOVERNMENT WITH NOT CONSULTING PEOPLES INVOLVED. MRS. SUZMAN OBJECTED TO "THIS UGLY AFFAIR WHERE POWERLESS PEOPLE ARE MOVED AROUND LIKE A LOT OF PAWNS ON A CHESS BOARD, BECAUSE OF THIS TIDYING UP THE GEOGRAPHIC MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA SO THAT IT WILL BE REFLECTED IN NEAT LITTLE BLACK SQUARES AND NEAT LITTLE WHITE SQUARES."

5. APPROXIMATELY 200,000 AFRICANS FROM "BLACK SPOTS", I.E. LAND OWNED BY AFRICANS OR BY GOVERNMENT AND SURROUNDED BY "WHITE" AREAS, HAVE BEEN RESETTLED IN HOMELANDS (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS NATIVE RESERVES) SINCE 1948, 10,000 OF THEM IN 1973. FIGURES FOR 1974 NOT YET AVAILABLE. SPOKESMAN FOR AGGRIEVED TSWANA TRIBESMEN HAVE TOLD PRESS THAT BOPHUTHATSWANA GOVERNMENT HAS IGNORED THEIR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE BY SIMPLY NOTING THAT REMOVALS ARE A MATTER CONTROLLED BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

6. COMMENT: THE TSWANA TRIBESMEN, LIKE MANY OTHERS IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES, ARE APPARENTLY CRUSHED BETWEEN INTENT OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO REMOVE "BLACK SPOTS" AND DESIRE OF HOMELAND GOVERNMENTS TO ACHIEVE BETTER CONSOLIDATION OF THEIR TERRITORIES. IT POSSIBLE, BUT BY NO MEANS DEFINITE, THAT INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION FOCUSED ON DIMBAZA, LIMEHILL,

AND OTHER EXAMPLES OF SAG INEPTITUDE AND CALLOUSNESS IN RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES HAS PROMPTED BETTER PRESATTLEMENT PLANNING IN SUCH AREAS. NEVERTHELESS, THIS AFFORDS SCANT COMFORT TO THOSE WHO MUST BE MOVED TO SATISFY THE IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED IMPERATIVE OF "TIDYING UP THE MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA TO EFFECT ITS BALKANIZATION.

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